

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056190

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR AND SEITZ FROM DICK MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PDEV, RH, US, UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: REUTERS STORY ON US/UK DIFFERENCES

REF: LONDON'S 3550

1. I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR PASSING THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE,
IN EITHER ORAL OR WRITTEN FORM, AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE
OPPORTUNITY TO WHOMEVER YOU BELIEVE CAN GET IT MOST
PROMPTLY TO DAVID OWEN.

2. BEGIN TEXT: DEAR DAVID, I AM MOST DISTRESSED BY
THE TERRIBLY UNFORTUNATE REUTERS ARTICLE FROM LUSAKA. I
HOPE THAT IT IS UNNECESSARY FOR ME TO ASSURE YOU THAT
I HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. AT NO TIME HAVE
I EVER DESCRIBED OR DISCUSSED OUR MEETINGS IN LONDON
IN THE TERMS SET FORTH IN THE ARTICLE. NOR CAN I IMAGINE
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ANY OF THE LIMITED NUMBER OF OUR PEOPLE WHO HAD ACCESS
TO OUR OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS OF THE MEETINGS WHO WOULD
HAVE PIECED TOGETHER SUCH A VERSION OF THE LONDON TALKS
AND PUT IT FORTH TO THIS OR ANY OTHER JOURNALIST OR TO
ANYONE OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT.

3. THIS HAVING BEEN SAID, I AM AT A LOSS TO KNOW HOW

BEST TO DEAL WITH THE STORY. THUS FAR WE HAVE FLATLY
REFUSED COMMENT AND HAVE INSISTED THAT OUR RELATIONS ARE
CLOSE AND HARMONIOUS. BECAUSE THERE ARE ELEMENTS OF FACT
IN THE STORY, E.G., I HAD CONTEMPLATED A TRIP TO SOUTHERN
AFRICA, A BLANKET DENIAL WILL NOT SERVE. IF WE DENY THE
THRUST OF THE STORY, JOURNALISTS WILL PRESS US ON
SPECIFIC ASPECTS. IF WE DENY CERTAIN SPECIFIC DETAILS,
THEY WILL BEGIN TO PICK US TO PIECES. UNLESS YOU FEEL
QUITE STRONGLY TO THE CONTRARY, I WOULD PROPOSE
TO CONTINUE TO REFUSE ANY COMMENT AND HOPE THE MATTER
WILL DIE. MORE TIMES THAN NOT, THE PACK DOES NOT
PURSUE A SINGLE EXCLUSIVE STORY. THUS FAR WE HAVE HAD
NO QUERIES HERE.

4. AGAIN, LET ME ASSURE YOU HOW BADLY I FEEL ABOUT THIS.
NONE OF MY ASSOCIATIONS IN THIS JOB HAS BEEN MORE MEAN-
INGFUL TO ME THAN OUR FRANK AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP.
CLEARLY THERE ARE DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD AND I HOPE THAT
WE CAN CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER IN THE PURSUIT
OF COMMON OBJECTIVES. MOST SINCERELY, DICK MOOSE END
TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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